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* Mr. V. T. Arasu:—" Mr. President, Sir, though I do not belong to the Nambudiri community which is concerned in this Bill, I have great pleasure in seconding the motion of my hon. Friend Mr. Thangal. I trust that the Bill will be referred to a Select Committee and that the hon. the Law Member will not come forward with a dilatory motion of the kind that he brought in connexion with the Bill that was just before us, namely, that the Bill be circulated for the purpose of eliciting opinion thereon. It is very regrettable that Government should adopt this obstructionist and defeatist policy with regard to measures brought by private members. I do not see what the Council is here for, if non-official members are not given opportunities to move and bring forward Bills on matters with which they are concerned.

" The hon. Mover of this motion has explained in detail the objects of this Bill and its very important provisions. At this stage I feel it is not necessary for me to go any further into the detailed points on which this Bill has got a bearing. I would conclude by earnestly requesting the hon. the Law Member once over, not to move any motion for circulating the Bill for eliciting public opinion." 4 p.m.

(As it was then 4 o'clock, the adjournment motion was taken up.)

VI.—ADJOURNMENT MOTION *RE* THE CONDUCT OF REVENUE OFFICERS OF THE GOVERNMENT AT ELLORE.

* Mr. Sami Venkatachalam Chetti:—" Mr. President, Sir, I beg to move that the business of the Council be adjourned for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance, viz.—

> '*the conduct of the Revenue Officers of the Government at the public meeting held at the Young Men's Hindu Association, Ellore, on the 18th October* 1931.'

" Sir, I feel I must preface the few remarks that I am going to make in this connexion, by an apology to the Council for venturing to adjourn the business of this House by a motion instead of being satisfied with the answers that might be elicited by putting interpellations to the Government. My experience of the last 7 years of this Council has taught me that invariably on questions of importance and public interest, the Government have no information on the interpellations put by non-officials. When the Members of the Government are attacked by a fusilade of supplementary questions, they hesitate to consider the advisability of calling for information. In fact that reluctant acceptance to agree to consider the suggestion for calling for further information is not generally followed up by action unless there is the prospect of a resolution or adjournment motion coming up for discussion in the Council. When such motions or resolutions are tabled, the Government have the particular knack of defeating the purpose by metaphysical arguments or by mechanised majorities. But if these resolutions are backed up by a consensus of opinion from all sections of the House, then the Government show a tendency to agree to consider the subject-matter of the motion and thus effectively persuade the movers of the motions to withdraw them. I must admit that hon. Members of this House, to whatever section of the House they may belong, are always

ready to agree to withdraw motions provided they see even a ray of a conciliatory attitude on the part of the Government. If, in spite of the numerous infantile diseases that beset non-official resolutions, we are able to carry a resolution in spite of the opposition of the Government, then they do not give effect to the resolution justifying their action because of the persistent attitude of the non-official Members in passing that resolution. Therefore, Sir, we might be excused if, in spite of the fact that there is the opportunity of eliciting the Government point of view by putting interpellations, we persist in wasting the time of the Council by bringing forward resolutions or adjournment motions. But I may assure the hon. Members of the Government that there is absolutely no intention on the part of any hon. Member of this House to waste the time of the Council, because with the waste of the time of the Council, one's own individual time is wasted. Knowing, as we do, the professions and occupations in which hon. Members of the House are engaged, it must be rather incredible to believe that they can afford to waste their time by moving motions which would prove to be ineffective.

" With this apology, Sir, I move this motion. In regard to this particular motion I am further handicapped by the fact that this is perhaps the first time I am referring to the conduct of individual officers of the Government. It is no pleasant task to any hon. Member of this House to indulge in attacks against Government officers who are not present here to refute the arguments or allegations made against them. If, in spite of all these handicaps, I feel impelled to bring to the notice of the Government the conduct of particular officers of the Government, it is more in the interest of peace and order and contentment of the people affected than in feeling any pleasure by indulging in personal attacks and recriminations. The officer concerned in this matter is one Mr. Venkataramana Rao Nayudu, Deputy Collector of Ellore. I understand that Mr. Mothay Ganga Raju who was a Member of the Legislative Council in the year 1926 as a representative of the Congress Party which swamped the elections then and who was sitting on this side of the House, issued invitations convening a public meeting of ryots of the West Godavari district in order to publish the truth about the resettlement proposals. The notice convening the meeting was printed in Telugu so that the ryots, who are all Telugu people, may understand the purpose for which the meeting was organized. I have myself seen a copy of this notice and I can say unhesitatingly that it cannot be said that that meeting was organized to represent a particular point of view and that it was not open to those who differed from that point of view. When this notice was sent, it was accompanied by a letter signed by the Deputy Collector addressed to individuals asking them to be present at the meeting. I can understand officers of the Government taking the trouble of explaining the policy of the Government to the ryots by directly calling for a conference of the ryots or by themselves going to the residences of the ryots or places of public resort and explaining the matter. But I cannot surely reconcile myself to the position which this Government officer occupies when he enclosed with the invitation of a public man his own letter asking the ryots to be present. Is the public to understand that the meeting was organized by one

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amongst themselves in order to know the truth about resettlement proposals or that the meeting was one in which Government officers alone were going to be allowed to speak correctly or incorrectly? That was the dilemma in which the public were, as the notice of the meeting was accompanied by the letter from the Deputy Collector. Granting that that was permissible, what do we find later on? A large number of people assembled in the hall, numbering about a thousand, amongst whom there were many ryots. My friend Mr. Mothay Gangarazu proposed, as the convenor of the meeting, Mr. Venkataramana Rao Nayudu to the chair. Thus he became the chairman of the meeting. He is a Deputy Collector; and now he is the chairman of a meeting convened by a resident of the locality. As the chairman of the meeting, he began with his introductory speech and he took care to say that the meeting was organized for the purpose of explaining the truth about the resettlement rates. If he had anticipated what was to take place afterwards in the meeting, he would have taken care to say that the meeting was organized to explain the Government point of view on resettlement proposals. Every one in that district, I daresay, is too painfully aware he therefore said at the beginning that the meeting was organized to explain the truth about the resettlement proposals. At the entrance to this meeting place, there was a big placard of welcome welcoming everybody to come to the meeting and to hear the truth about the resettlement proposals. We are familiar with the truth about the resettlement proposals. Every one in that district, I dare say, is too painfully aware of the truth about the resettlement rates; they need no reminder from this Deputy Collector; they must have watched the resettlement operations which took place against the protest of the public and of this Council. They must be aware that subsequently the Government, as a concession which is very unusual, generously agreed to the constitution of an Economic Enquiry Committee to enquire into the economic condition of these districts. They must also be aware that that distinguished Committee refuted every statement that was made by the Settlement Officer and came to different conclusions from those of the Settlement Officer. The Committee reported to the Government that the enhancement of the rates was unwarranted and that great hardship would be caused. They were also aware that the Government did not pass orders on the report of the Economic Enquiry Committee and that they delayed it as long as possible. They were also aware that many protests were made by means of interpellations, resolutions and adjournment motions in this Council, in order to impress on the attention of the Government the necessity of not levying the enhanced rates. They were also aware of the prevaricating answers which the Government gave without saying definitely whether they would levy these enhanced rates from this year or not. They were also aware of the latest reply of the hon. the Revenue Member that the $18\frac{3}{4}$ per cent would be distributed among three years, that he had not yet made up his mind whether he would levy any enhanced rate this year and that he would call for reports from these districts to see whether the economic condition of the people would justify the levy of the enhanced rate. It is this vagueness and it is this indefiniteness that compelled the people of these districts to kept up an agitation.

4-15 p.m. " Well, Sir, if the Government were not convinced of the necessity of suspending these rates, having regard to the existing state of affairs of those districts, what else could possibly convince the Government? Naturally, therefore, the ryots were interested to see that they sent up protests, petitions and appeals to the Government to suspend these rates. Well, the Government might have been well-intentioned in asking District Collectors to forward reports on the economic condition; but the Government ought also to be aware from their long experience that they have got officers whose zeal always outruns their discretion. It is to that category that our friend, Mr. Venkataramana Rao Nayudu, belongs; and it is due to the conduct of such officers, Sir, that the Government is brought into disaffection, ridicule and contempt. If to-day there is dissatisfaction against the administration of this Government, it is due more to the misguided zeal and enthusiasm of some of its officers.

" Now, turning to the history of that meeting, I am to say that, as the President was speaking, Mr. Dandu Narayana Raju, a Member of the Legislative Council in the last Council, a member of the Economic Enquiry Committee and the Secretary of the Ryots Association, stood up from his seat and asked the President if, in regard to the exposition of the truth about the re-settlement proposals, anybody else would be entitled to speak. The President at once scented danger—because his statements would bear no scrutiny, no evidence, if only the other side began to open its mouth; and so the first step that he took was to silence the other side and that was by stating 'No, nobody else has power to speak excepting those who are called upon', that is, excepting those who were selected by the President. He then proceeded with his speech and said that a propaganda for a no-tax campaign was being organized in the districts. That is a statement which affected the reputation and the methods of those who constituted themselves as the representatives of the ryots."

* Rao Sahib B. VENKATARAMAYYA:—" Sir, I raise a point of order, there is a proceeding pending in a court of law. The whole proceedings at that meeting form the subject of a case before a court; and evidence will have to be let in on all these points. Under these circumstances, I think it is not admissible, when the case is *sub judice*, that those matters should be discussed here."

* Mr. SAMI VENKATACHALAM CHETTI: " I have not yet come to that line or boundary wherein it may be said that I am transgressing the rules or standing orders in regard to matters which are *sub judice*.

" Sir, I was saying that he would not allow Mr. D. Narayana Raju to proceed. Naturally, there was some hissing and confusion."

* Mr. F. E. JAMES:—" On a point of order, Sir. My friend on the opposite side of the House has placed a very important question before the House as to whether a reference to some of the incidents is admissible owing to the fact that the whole case is *sub judice*. The hon. Member himself admits that they are not admissible. I wish to suggest, Sir, to you, with respect, that the decision on the matter rests with you and you only. I should like to know whether that matter has received your attention."

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* The hon. the PRESIDENT :—" The hon. the Mover of the motion has himself answered the question, and I therefore thought that it was not necessary to give any ruling on that point."

* Mr. SAMI VENKATACHALAM CHETTI :—" Sir, I am only objecting to the Deputy Collector silencing the other point of view from being expressed in a meeting ostensibly for the purpose of propounding the truth of the resettlement proposals. Sir, I am only appealing to the Government to restrain these over-zealous officials, so that their action might not have the undesirable effect of fomenting discontent and agitation. We are passing through critical periods. It is the business both of the Government and of the public to see that no cause is given for grievance on either side. I am glad the Government is in a position to appreciate the difficulties from which these agriculturists are suffering. I have no doubt that with the same kind of attitude, they would come to the conclusion not to levy even that one anna rate for this year. I am speaking, Sir, in this strain because there does not seem to be any anxiety on the part of the Government to grind the poor agricultural ryot. They only want to know the truth. They are sometimes under the impression that too much is made of the economic depression. Probably, they are justified in trying to know the real truth. They will have the assistance of the public in their attempts to find out the truth. But instead of deputing that work to persons who seem to think that by collecting more revenue in these distressing circumstances, they would be pleasing the Government, they themselves must take the trouble of going to the districts and finding out the truth which would convince both the Government and the public of the justness of their claims. It is from that point of view that I am appealing to the Government. It is not with a view to make a complaint against a particular official. Probably there may be number of people who would like to follow that example so long as it would benefit their personal prospects. Sir, it will be impossible for me to think that the public of these districts are merely exaggerating or aggravating their difficulties when I see persons like my hon. Friend Mr. Venkataramayya Nayudu presiding over a meeting of the agricultural ryots protesting against the levy of these enhanced rates. To mention only one person, Mr. Venkataramayya Nayudu, who is a representative of that district, was the president of a meeting to protest against these enhancements. Having regard to the circumstances, having regard to the real nature of the conditions of the people, would it be possible to believe that there would be anybody of those agricultural ryots who would say that they agree to these enhanced rates, that they would invite the Government to levy these rates?—that would be too incredible to believe. So, any representation that may be made by any public meeting organized by any one who would favour the enhanced rates should be considered to be a cooked up one, a faked up thing, and not a real thing. I therefore appeal to the Government to know the truth of the matter and issue orders to their subordinate officers to be sympathetic to the people, not to add to the troubles of the Government which are already too many, by unnecesarily creating agitation by organizing counter-meetings and getting some people to support their

move. Sir, I have absolutely no malice against the particular officer in making this motion. I only want that we must be saved from any disastrous consequences that might follow. I do not want to refer to the proceedings launched against these gentlemen in a court of law. It is for the Government to say whether it would be in consonance with their declared intentions to help the ryot and agriculturist to go on with proceedings of that sort . . ."

* The hon. Diwan Bahadur Sir M. KRISHNAN NAYAR:—" Now, I am afraid that my hon. Friend is treading on forbidden ground. To make any observations regarding a pending case is not admissible; and my friend is as much aware as myself of the standing orders and the rules of the Legislative Council bearing on this."

* Mr. SAMI VENKATACHALAM CHETTI:—" I shall take the advice of the hon. the Law Member. But still, Sir, I do not know if I have made any observations on the case before the Court. I request the Government to find out if it is desirable to go on with these prosecutions.

" With these observations, Sir, and a fervent appeal to the Government not to misunderstand the people but really to give a healthy and tonic restraint to their over-zealous officers to act and conduct themselves agreeably in the districts, I move this motion. That would, I think, more than repay the labours which this House has put forth in regard to the well-being of the ryots."

Mr. ABDUL HAMEED KHAN:—" Mr. President, it is indeed very unfortunate that some Members in this House have to bring forward motions of this nature, motions to adjourn the normal business of the House as it is understood, in order to discuss a matter of very urgent and recent importance. As has been stated by the Mover, none of us here comes to waste either his own time or the time of the House. If we bring forward adjournment motions, we do so under the standing orders. If an adjournment motion is made, it is not beyond the standing orders, and this every Member realizes. I daresay every Member of the House will agree with me when I say that we know our responsibilities. When we bring forward motions like this, we do so under great necessity.

" Mr. President, Sir, the motion is one of very great importance, because it affects the very people whom we seek to represent in this House. It is possible that those who are seated here in the Opposition may hold an opinion which may not be agreed to by Members of Government or those who support the Government. But yet, the Government follow one policy; the Government have to consider the prestige of their officers; they have to consider their own prestige. We have not the time or the opportunity, as Members of Government have, to know the truth about all things as they arise; but we do recognize that we have to support the Government in their actions whenever and wherever they do require to be supported. At the same time, there are certain actions of the Government which cannot be accepted by the

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real representatives of the people; because they know that the situation created by the actions of Government needs, in certain cases, criticism and representation in this House.

" Sir, this matter of resettlement, in the three districts of the Circars, has become an ancient affair. We have known how agitation has been carried on in the districts; and as a result of that agitation, representatives of those districts invited the attention of Government in this very House thereto. Government very wisely agreed to the appointment of an Enquiry Committee. The Enquiry Committee, on the agreement of the Government, went into the question, spent a lot of time over it and came to certain conclusions. After all, Sir, to whom and to which officer are the conclusions of this Enquiry Committee to be referred for report—to the very same officer, the same settlement officer who was carrying on his resettlement work before the Enquiry Committee was appointed? Was this the person to whom this report should be referred for report again? Sir, is that a proper procedure I ask? Is that, I say a righteous procedure? If the Government were really interested in the welfare of the people, they would have certainly referred this report to an independent officer—an officer who was not directly concerned with the resettlement work in those three districts. Sir, the Government depended upon his report, and depending upon his report, they have resolved to take a certain course of action. Well, when the Members of this Council came to know that the Government were going to take action in contradiction to the conclusions of the Enquiry Committee, a motion was tabled in this House, and it was passed, and that is that the Government should not give effect to their desires with regard to the re-settlement question.

" Sir, Government flouted the decision of this Council, went merrily along with their work and now they are face to face with a situation which I am sure from the way in which they or some of their officers are conducting themselves in those districts, is serious indeed. They found themselves helpless after the thing was done. If they felt that what was being done was the proper thing, certainly they would not have resorted to this method of holding public meetings, and sending out officers among the ryots in order ostensibly to explain as it were the truth of this resettlement affair. As a matter of fact, from analogies from other provinces we can easily observe that it is in order to coerce the ryot into paying the enhanced rates that this is done. This is the way in which the Government wishes to collect the rates from the poor ryots who are not able even to carry on the work of cultivation on account of the prevailing economic depression. Sir, we know that the Government says it wishes to explain the truth of it to the ryots so that they might not succumb to the agitation that a handful of people are carrying on in the province. Sir, I might ask the Government and such of my colleagues as are here whether it will be possible for a handful of people to carry on any agitation unless they know that the people are behind it. The ryots are behind it. It is at the instance of the ryots who feel that there is a real grievance in regard to this matter that conferences and public meetings are held. They are carrying on a consti-

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tutional agitation in order to impress upon the Government that their point of view might be considered and that the Government might not enforce the enhanced resettlement rates. Sir, the Government say that they are not going to force the people to pay these enhanced rates immediately. But then, they don't realize that when a people find it difficult to pay even the existing rates on account of the economic conditions . . . . prevailing."

* Mr. F. E. JAMES:—" Sir, may I rise to a point of order? I do not want to interrupt the hon. Gentleman but I should like to ask you, Sir, whether in view of the fact that the adjournment motion deals with the conduct of the revenue divisional officer at a particular meeting on a particular date, it is in order to make a general review of the revenue settlement policy of the Government."

* The hon. the PRESIDENT:—" It is wrong to make a general review of the whole situation. I would request the hon. Member to confine his remarks to this particular motion."

Mr. ABDUL HAMEED KHAN:—" I bow to your ruling, Sir, but I would tell my hon. Friend who interrupted that if what was sought to be explained at the public meeting was the truth of the question, I want to tell the House what the truth was, whether what they said was the truth or was not the truth. Sir, the Government, as I said, was in a helpless condition. The Revenue Divisional Officer whose name was mentioned by the hon. Mover, that is, Mr. Venkataramana Rao Nayudu, was one of those present at that public meeting; and I understand that at that public meeting he was proposed to the chair. He was the president of the public meeting and he was there to explain on behalf of the Government the truth about the resettlement rates. Well, Sir, if there are any members in this House who, on account of their social relationship with that particular gentleman, want to come forward to take up his brief, to take up his cause, I wish to tell them that they have to place their public duty above their sympathy for their relations. We are here in this Council to represent the people. We are not here to represent our relations. Sir, if my relation has acted against the interests of the public . . ."

Rao Sahib B. VENKATARAMAYYA:—" Does this relate to the conduct of this officer, this homily? "

Mr. ABDUL HAMEED KHAN:—" Yes, Sir. If he is the relation of any one . . ."

The hon. the PRESIDENT:—" Order, order. The hon. Member will see that he confines his remarks to the conduct of the officer."

Mr. ABDUL HAMEED KHAN:—" Sir, the Revenue Divisional Officer is also a Magistrate. He was there in his capacity of the Revenue Divisional Officer in order to explain to the ryots a matter purely concerning the revenue of the State. He was presiding there over a public meeting not called by him nor by any Government agency, but a public meeting called by a private individual, a citizen of that place.

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It might be by accident or by design that he was chosen to be the president of that meeting. I dare say it was an accident because he was supposed to be one of the leading persons at that meeting on that occasion. He was voted to the chair. He ought to have taken, as chairman of a public meeting where people had assembled holding different opinions, no point of view therein. It was his duty as chairman not to take any particular point of view, for as chairman it was his duty to remain neutral. It was his duty to allow all points of view to be expressed on the question which was being discussed at that meeting. On the other hand, we find that he becomes a partisan. He does not act as the elected chairman of a public meeting, but a partisan of a particular point of view. And when he becomes a partisan, that meeting did not remain a public meeting. He converted it into a meeting of his own. Of course the Government knows what has happened ultimately, and I do not wish to enter into the question which is considered to be forbidden on account of its being sub-judice (The hon. Diwan Bahadur Sir M. Krishnan Nayar:—' You can't '), on accounnt of certain rules which prevent me from going into them. But then the Government knows, all the public knows, what the result has been of the action of the Government. Sir, I should like to refer in this connection to the fact that the Banking Enquiry Committee have supported the conclusions of the Economic Enquiry Committee, and they have also incorporated many chapters into their report. That itself shows that there seems to be a consensus of opinion with regard to this matter, and yet the Government use their officers in order to force the hands of the people and create situations out of which they find it very difficult to extricate themselves. Sir, I hope the hon. the Revenue Member who has a reputation for mercy, who has got a reputation for love of truth, who has got a reputation for everything that is good (' Hear, hear ' and Laughter) will forget that he is the Revenue Member of the Government of Madras (Laughter) when he has to deal with this very important matter. I therefore join in the appeal that has been made by the hon. Mover, and I would request the hon. the Revenue Member to see that this thing is dealt with in a manner that situations that have been created are not repeated and the people's case is considered sympathetically."

* Mr. C. Indrayya:—" Mr. President, Sir, coming as I do from the districts where this incident took place, I feel it my duty to support this motion. Before I deal with the conduct of the officer in question, I must briefly preface it by stating the events that have led up to the summoning of the meeting on the 18th of this month. Ever since the publication by the Government of the notification, G.O. No. 1486 giving effect to the proposals of Mr. Holdsworth with regard to the enhanced rates, the ryots in my district and also in the district of East Godavari woke up and began to realise their helplessness in this matter. They began to ventilate their grievances by holding meetings. Various meetings were held all through the districts, and resolutions were passed praying the Government to cancel the G.O. No. 1486, as the ryots are not able to bear any additional taxation under the present economic conditions. To carry on further propaganda in the matter, several ryots'

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organizations, firka organizations, taluk organizations, and district organizations came into existence, and the movement has been gaining strength day by day. And either at the instance of the Government or on their own initiative some of the over-zealous Revenue officers of the Government took it into their heads to organize a counter-agitation in the matter and try to interfere with the free expression of opinion of the people with regard to the resettlement. With this object in view I understand an informal gathering was held on the 13th of this month in the office of the Ellore Revenue Divisional Officer. There the District Collector of West Godavari, I understand, was also present. Some other non-officials of the district also were present, to decide upon a course of action with regard to this agitation that has been going on in the district. There it was decided to convene a meeting of the people of the district on the 18th instant, and it was also decided at that meeting that invitations should be issued over the signature of Rao Bahadur Mothay Gangaraju to all the people in the district. Accordingly invitations were issued over his signature to various people in the district asking them to attend the meeting to be convened on the 18th of this month. The object of the meeting, as announced in those invitations, was to organize a People's Party in the district with a view to publish the truth about the resettlement question. That was the object as stated in the invitations. Accordingly on the 18th of October at the appointed time, 4 p.m. several people gathered there, not only people to whom invitations were issued but also several others to whom no invitations were sent. There were several leading ryots and there were several leading title-holders present on the occasion. The District Collector of West Godavari, I understand, was also present there. The Revenue Divisional Officers of Bhimavaram, Narasapur and Kovvur, I understand, were also present on the occasion. Then the Ellore Revenue Divisional Officer was proposed to the chair and he commenced his speech by stating the object of the meeting to be to form a People's Association or a People's Party in the district. Mr. D. Narayana Raju, I understand, asked the president whether others would be allowed an opportunity to speak on the occasion, and the president replied that only speakers selected by him would be allowed to speak and no others. It seems that Mr. Narayana Raju protested against the reply given by the president and said that it was not proper not to allow others to speak on the occasion. The president got wild, I understand, and said, 'You have no business to talk here; shut up; sit down' and so on. He was thus insulted by the president. Thus, he was made to sit and the president was proceeding with his speech and he was stating in the course of his speech that some people were misrepresenting facts with regard to the resettlement and propagating false ideas."

4-45 p.m. Diwan Bahadur M. GOPALASWAMI MUDALIYAR:—"I rise to a point of order, Sir. I am afraid he is going into matters sub-judice."

* Mr. C. INDRAYYA:—" Mr. President, I shall not go into the merits of the prosecution or into the conduct of the Revenue Divisional Officer in arresting the five gentlemen on the occasion. I will only deal with one act of the Revenue Divisional Officer, i.e., insulting some of the

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leading gentlemen of the district who gathered there. One Mr. Narayana Deo from East Godavari was brought specially to Ellore to make a speech on the 18th and he was asked to address the gathering. For some time he addressed the gathering. During his speech there were some hissings and interruptions and subsequently the meeting was dissolved. Then followed the arrest of the five gentlemen. I am not concerned with the arrest. It is not my business to deal with the propriety or otherwise of the arrest or the conduct of the Magistrate in arresting them. Revenue officers in the district are entrusted with the revenue and administration of criminal justice. They are invested with certain powers. It is their duty to watch public opinion in the district and to report to the Government impartially. Revenue officers should not organize counter-propaganda or become parties to public meetings. If the Government want to carry on counter-propaganda in the matter, let them do it by all means. But let them not instruct Revenue officers who are invested with powers. Let them appoint special officers to carry on propaganda in the matter. In this connexion I may tell you one other instance which took place in my own taluk of Narasapur. Mr. Manne Satyanarayana is a village munsif owning 200 acres of land and paying Rs. 1,000 as land tax. He happened to preside over a ryots' conference at Palakole, Narasapur taluk."

* The hon. Diwan Bahadur Sir M. KRISHNAN NAYAR:—"I am afraid, Sir, that my friend is going beyond the limits of the resolution before us. I submit that the motion is limited to what occurred in a public meeting held at Ellore on a particular date, the 18th October. He refers to actions of other persons on other days."

* The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"Order, order. Probably the hon. Member wanted to throw further light upon the conduct that was exhibited on that particular date. However, I request the hon. Member not to mention that particular point again."

* Mr. C. INDRAYYA:—"Now there is a criminal case pending against all these five people. So, I am not going to express any opinion on the conduct of the Magistrate. If, after the case is over, the Revenue Board institutes an enquiry, I hope justice will be done to the gentlemen concerned. With these few remarks I have great pleasure in supporting this motion."

* Rao Sahib B. VENKATARAMAYYA:—"Mr. President, Sir, before I go into the subject proper I must answer one insidious insinuation made by an hon. Member from the other side. It was stated that a man should rise above his interests and do his duty. (Hear, hear.) In stating so, probably my friend judges others by his own standard. (Mr. Abdul Hameed Khan: 'I have no relations.') That I am one who can rise above personal interest is clear from the fact that the supporters of the accused after arrest came and requested me to appear on their behalf. Another thing is that, when they convened a protest meeting they came and asked me to preside and to speak therein. Before this meeting was announced they came with a written notice and

asked me to sign the same. I said that so far as resettlement rates were concerned I was one in perfect agreement with them in raising my protest against the action and conduct of the Government. I have done so fearlessly here and elsewhere and I continue to do it. I made this point clear to them and added that I cannot be a party to muster people to disturb a meeting held under the auspices of the West Godavari People's Association. I said, 'Don't spoil your programme by attending and coming into conflicts with meetings which other parties organize and hold. If you carry on your work it is a sufficient condemnation of the counter-propaganda'. I said, I cannot be a party and I won't sign the notice. Secondly the day on which the meeting was convened one gentleman interested came to me and ascertained from me whether I would attend the meeting in the evening. Then again I said, 'It seems to me to be a private meeting. If they do not allow you it is not right for you to speak there at all. You organize a different meeting and speak there.' I am sorry to have to refer to these incidents. But for the fact that an insinuation was made and I am forced to speak I should not have referred to these incidents. (Mr. Abdul Hameed Khan: 'I did not mention names.') You need not mention names. It is clear enough to everybody. I protest against it most emphatically. People in my own district and people who are supporting the accused know what I am. I do not care whether my hon. Friend judges me after his own standard. Of course I happened to be present at the meeting and I cannot help stating what I know. (Mr. Sami Venkatachalam Chetti: 'In spite of your advice not to attend.') I did not advise them not to attend. I advised them to restrain themselves and speak in their own meeting. I also told them that I may or may not attend and that if my Court work permitted I would attend. It is not a matter about those things that is in issue. (Cries of 'Oh!'). The cry of 'Oh' does not matter either. (Laughter.) I am accustomed to this sort of interruptions.

"Then coming to the question, Sir, my friend read the notice from a certain paper. I do not know whether he has got the authority to say that the organizers of the meeting published the notice to the effect that there will be a public meeting. So far as I am aware, there was separate special invitation sent to some members. (A voice: 'Were they not tom-tommed?') Then, when some of these people who had no invitation wanted to attend. . . (A voice: 'Why did you attend?') Because I was invited. They said they would merely attend the meeting and not take part in it. I am not going to discuss the subsequent proceedings because according to me they are matters which cannot be discussed in the Council so long as a case is pending in Court. So far as the conduct of the Revenue officers is coneerned in organizing or giving their support to the meeting, there is nothing wrong; it is not the Revenue officers that have to be blamed but the Government that put them in this ridiculous position. In answer to clause (*g*) of question No. 445-A of Mr. Abdul Hameed Khan, viz., whether there are any instructions to Revenue officials to carry on counter-propaganda

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on the resettlement propaganda, this is what the Government say: 'Yes: A leaflet on the subject has been sent to the Collectors for distribution in the villages. A copy of the leaflet is attached.' The leaflet says:

> 'They have spread the collection of increase over a period of 3 and 4 years respectively in the case of lands in which the enhancement is 18¾ per cent. and those on which it is 12½ per cent. . . Considering that even this concession may not meet the situation if the downward tendency of prices continues Government have undertaken to examine the question whether the amount of remission granted in each fasli might not be increased with reference to the economic situation prevailing at the time when kist collections are due to begin. Please remember this important assurance and do not listen to the advice of interested agitators who will incite you to unconstitutional courses of action.'

"What can the poor Revenue subordinate do in the light of the instructions of Government? I do not see anything wrong in the conduct of the Revenue subordinates to obey the mandates of the Government. Well, so far as the merits are concerned, I already said that I am not going to speak about it, nor is it permissible to do so. So that I do not really see the object of the Mover in moving the motion or in wording it as a protest against the conduct of the Revenue officials. It is under the authoritative mandate of the Government that the meetings were held. As regards the other point I am in perfect agreement with him; notwithstanding all our agitation, Government have come to a certain view, passed the Government Order and enhanced the rates. Still they say there is time yet to consider for not collecting the rates at all. In spite of that statement they know that members are not going to rest content. Why should the Government not say at least now: 'We are not going to enforce the rates in which case there will be no trouble at all.'? Instead of asking the subordinates to carry on counter-propaganda, I should think that would be the better course.

"All the same, I am not in agreement with those who preach a no-tax campaign. I am certainly jealous of the ryots' interests, and I am myself organizing Ryots' associations in my own way and telling them that their associations are for the protection of their own interests, not merely against the injustice done to them by the present Government but probably also the injustice that may be done by future governments, as even under a government by our own people there may be such occasions. I tell them that as such occasions might arise they will have to organize their own associations, memorialize the Government and send their protests, and that if they proceed on that footing the Government would still yield to them and cancel the collection of any enhanced tax. Well, Sir, as to what would happen in the future, that is a matter to be considered then. 5 p.m.

"Again, Sir, there seems to be some truth in the assertion on the part of the Government that not altogether true facts are put before the ryots by some speakers at these meetings. I have to say that because, in certain meetings organized as Ryots' associations resolutions are sent up to us that we Legislative Councillors should resign our seats because the Government did not cancel the resettlement rates.

What does that mean ? That shows that these meetings of ryots are organized not merely in the interests of the ryots but to do propaganda work for some other purpose. (A voice: What is the purpose ?) You and I know what it is. We find there is a certain section saying that we ought not to go to the Legislative Council. What is the meaning of that propaganda ? (A voice: Is it to displace you ?) That is how the electorate is educated. I say that would not do. By all means be earnest about the ryots' interests and organize associations to really protest against the conduct of the Government. The Government may not agree with you. But if you have your own views on the matters and feel that a certain position taken up by the Government is wrong, there is nothing wrong in expressing your own view-point, and pressing it, till you succeed in the matter. Success may be attained by several methods, I may adopt one method, and another man may adopt another method. At the same time, I may say that I am no supporter of the Government in respect of the resettlement question. I have not only presided over but have preached at meetings that the attitude of the Government on this question is not correct. On that point, I am absolutely clear. But there are certain persons who want to take part in meetings and create disturbances and thus take the consequences of their action. Well, if they are prepared to do so, let them do so.

" As I said before, when the mattter is pending before a Court of law, why should it be brought up here now ? In so far as it is argued that it is merely to criticize the conduct of the Revenue officers, I have shown there is absolutely no point in it. While particular parties might carry on their agitation against the Government, it may be that the other associations are organized by the officials or even by the Government itself. Yet, people have their own liberty to organize meetings as they like. But my hon. Friends on the other side say, 'just go and disturb those meetings organized by some other party that has a different programme.' That is not right." (Interruptions.)

* The hon. the PRESIDENT :—" The hon. Member has exceeded his time."

Rao Sahib B. VENKATARAMAYYA :—" I submit I have made my position absolutely clear, and I do not want to speak further."

* The hon. Mr. A. Y. G. CAMPBELL :—" Mr. President, Sir, my hon. Friend, the Mover of this resolution, began by explaining, as an apology for bringing this motion for the adjournment of the business of the House, that he was not able to get adequate information from the Government in answer to interpellations. Well, Sir, I must repudiate that charge on behalf of my Colleagues and myself. I can assure hon. Members that we do endeavour to obtain and give them information which they require. It is true that on occasions we refrain from complying with requests for information, generally because it would involve considerable amount of labour—and labour necessarily means expense—if that information were to be collected. But it is our

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endeavour to give hon. Members of this House all the information they may desire to have and which we can supply them with at a reasonable cost.

"Now, Sir, the motion is moved with reference to the conduct of the Revenue Divisional Officer in connexion with a certain meeting held at Ellore on the 18th October. I gather that objection is taken to his action in the following respects:—In the first place that he ought not to take any part at all in this movement to place before the people the truth about the resettlement; in the second place that he ought not to have sent out a covering letter to invite certain persons to attend the meeting which was called by Rao Bahadur Mothay Ganga Raju; in the third place, when some one wanted to speak at the meeting he should not have told him that it rested with the chairman to decide who was to speak at the meeting. Well, Sir, as regards the first point, I may read the following rule which is found in the Government Servants' Conduct Rules issued by the Government of India:—

'A Government servant may, for the purpose of removing misappprehensions, correcting misstatements and refuting disloyal and seditious propaganda, defend and explain in public the policy of the Government.'

"That shows that the Revenue officers were acting within their rights, if they had to deal with certain misstatements or something of that kind. Now, Sir, the information which had been received by the Collector of the district and which has been passed on to the Government is that misstatements were made in various meetings of ryots which were convened in different parts of the district. These were the kind of misstatements that were being made; that the taram of the class of lands is being raised—Rs. 2 land being raised to Rs. 3, Rs. 3 to Rs. 4 and so on; that in addition, the classification sources of irrigation were being raised and that this was being done before the enhancement of the rates is brought into force. It is true in one or two cases, there have been certain changes in the classification, but I think these have been generally in favour of the ryot rather than the other way. Another statement which has been made is that the water-cess is to be increased in this fasli; that is also a misstatement. Then, it is generally stated that the whole of the three annas increase would be put on and collected in this fasli, although the Government definitely stated that at the outset they will not collect more than one anna in the increase, and nothing whatever was said about the Government being willing to consider further whether any increase should be put on at all this year until we knew what the position was just before the time when the kist was due for collection. Those misstatements were naturally alarming the people, and, in addition, some speakers added words to the effect that there was no use carrying on constitutional agitation any more as the Government would not listen and that possibly the only thing to do was to have recourse to a no-tax campaign. This was very disturbing to the people of the district, and I think that the Revenue officers were perfectly right in taking measures, in which they had our support, to correct these misstatements and misapprehensions. Now, Sir, the way in which that can be done is naturally by convening

meetings of ryots at various places at which prominent non-officials who are well acquainted with the matter may be invited to address them. As far as I know, in this particular meeting there was no resolution under discussion, but it was merely a meeting for conveying information to the people who attended it.

"Now, as regards the charge that the Revenue Divisional Officer should not have sent the invitation in support of Mr. Mothey Ganga Raju's notice, I confess I can see no reason whatsoever why he should not have done so. Naturally, it was his desire that the leading representatives of the people of the neighbourhood should be present at this meeting and the fact that he would be likely to make what might be regarded as an official exposition of Government's policy would add force to the invitation.

"Then, Sir, as regards the charge that he regulated the speakers, that, I believe, is the usual duty of the chairman. In this House, any one who attempts to speak without your permission, Sir, is at once out of order, and I believe that is the general rule at all public meetings, that it is the chairman who regulates the proceedings and who decides who should speak at any particular moment, and no one should address the meeting without the permission of the chairman.

"My hon. Friend, Mr. Indrayya, asked me whether I will institute an enquiry regarding the conduct of the Revenue Divisional Officer at this meeting, after the judicial proceedings now going on are over. Well, Sir, I cannot make any such promise, because to make a promise of an enquiry will *prima facie* prejudge the case which is under enquiry. I shall, however, be prepared to look into the records of the case and see whether there is any case for an enquiry to be made. I do not wish to say anything with reference to the conduct of the Revenue Divisional Officer either one way or the other lest it should prejudice the proceedings of the court.

"The Mover of this motion suggested that we should not rely on the reports of our district officers as regards the condition of the district, because they are naturally prejudiced and would make reports in the direction which would please the Government. It is not my experience that district officers are not prepared to put forward what are their real opinions. I do not think for one moment that they feel cowed in any way or think that they must not give their true opinion. Certainly that is not my experience.

"In this case I have not expressed any *prima facie* opinion one way or the other. At the same time, I may mention that the Commissioner for Land Revenue and Settlement is about to proceed to these districts in the course of a few days and he will make personal enquiries. I hope
5-15 p.m. that I may be able to visit these districts before the end of the year. The first kist will fall due on the 10th January.

"The last speaker, Mr. Venkataramayya said that he was not in sympathy with the orders of the Government and that he intended to proceed with constitutional agitation against those orders. We have got no objection to any action on the part of the people taken with a

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view to place before us the actual facts and arguments. We want to know what the facts are regarding the condition of the people. We do not want mere abuse; that does not affect us one way or the other. I do not think that at the present time we can make up our minds fairly as to what we should do; for no one can tell just now, nor can any one have the courage to prophesy, what will take place during the next two months as regards the financial situation. I hope my remarks will have some effect in allaying suspicions regarding the attitude of Government in this matter.''

* Mr. Sami Venkatachalam Chetti:—"I submit to the House, Sir, that the object of bringing this motion gained emphasis on account of its connexion with the severity of the enhanced settlement rates. Ordinarily, a conduct of the nature complained of might not attract much attention if it was not combined with the severity of the tax. Therefore, having regard to the larger interests involved in the matter, whether the explanation of the Government in regard to the conduct of the officer concerned is satisfactory or not to this House, and having regard to the fact that the hon. the Revenue Member is still in the process of thinking whether the levy of one anna rate should be imposed this year or not, I should rather like to give no reason to complain against the attitude of this House in coming to that decision favourable to the agriculturists. With the assurance that at any rate we shall not be the persons who would be made an excuse for the continuance of the levy of that enhanced rate, discretion prompts me to withdraw the motion.''

The motion was by leave withdrawn.

The House adjourned to meet again at 11 a.m. the next day.

R. V. KRISHNA AYYAR,
Secretary to the Legislative Council.